

# Mash

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 the format, where all ten teams played each other in the group stage, it was always going to be a tough ask. Yet, the Tigers finished well below the expected mark, ending in eighth place after having targeted a semifinal berth. "We went there with expectations and from that point of view it is disappointing. If we look at the whole World Cup and how we played, if some things went in our favour, we could have played the semifinals. Overall it was a positive experience but at the same time, the expectations were higher and from that point of view, it was disappointing," Mashrafe told reporters yesterday upon his arrival at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka.

The close defeat to New Zealand and the washed out match against Sri Lanka certainly played a hand but Mashrafe took responsibility nevertheless.

"As a captain, when the team does not fulfil expectations, then I will have to accept criticism. Of course I am taking full responsibility and at the same time it is normal that there will be criticism anywhere in the world after a big tournament," the inspirational skipper added.

While his disappointment was evident when he suggested that 'the chips were down' in crucial matches, Mashrafe spoke highly of the youngsters' efforts and said they should not be blamed, adding that some could match the levels of the current Big Five.

"It's always the young players who are particularly blamed. Those who are seniors now, they were young once and not as consistent as they are now. The youngsters now are playing with a level of consistency and under a kind of intense pressure that we did not have to face when we were young," Mashrafe said, referencing younger players like Mohammad Saifuddin, Mehedi, Mustafizur and Liton Das. "So, they cannot be blamed unilaterally. They tried very hard. It is a big stage and it is not easy to perform here. I am hoping that with more experience they will reach the levels shown by Shakib, Tamim, Mushfiqur and Riyad."

Lack of consistency played a key role for the captain in their campaign, which could have ended differently. However, Shakib Al Hasan performed magnificently throughout the tournament and the captain duly credited his star all-rounder. "Shakib was outstanding. Shakib, Mushfiqur [Rahim], Mustafizur and Saifuddin played outstanding cricket. The others performed less consistently. At some particular points we needed luck to be on our side but that did not happen."

# Harmful bacteria

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 bacteria. Of them, samples from MODS Zone-1, 4 and 7 were found to be contaminated with Coliform bacteria which are usually pathogenic in nature and pose an immediate threat to the consumers, the report said.

Samples from MODS Zone 1, 2, 4 and 7 were found to be contaminated with Heterotrophic bacteria. Similar contamination was found in the samples collected from the two source points -- Saidabad Water Treatment Plant and Chadnight Water Treatment Plant.

Although these are usually non-pathogenic in nature, the viable threat of harmful bacteria coexisting in this group cannot be ruled out, the report added. MODS Zone- 1 covers the areas of East Side of Nababpur road, Bashabo, Gandaria, Jatrabari, Saydabad and Maniknagar.

MODS Zone- 2 covers the areas of the west side of Nababpur Road, Hazaribag, Nababganj, Nilkhet and Azimpur.

MODS Zone- 4 covers the areas of Agargaon, Rokeya Sarani, Pallabi Main Road, Gabtali, Beribadh and Pallabi.

MODS Zone- 7 covers the surrounding areas of Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra (DND) embankment.

The level of contamination in the abovementioned zones are not equal, the report said, adding that a thorough water monitoring campaign should be conducted in the areas to identify whether there are additional contaminated households.

It also asked to ensure financial and technical provisions so that water quality monitoring campaigns can be run on a regular basis, and as such, safe drinking water can be ensured for all.

On May 16, Dhaka Wasa admitted that its water supplied to 57 areas was polluted because of faulty pipes.

In April, several residents of Jurain appeared at the Wasa Bhaban in Karwan Bazar with lemons, sugar, and a jar of murky water which they said was supplied by the Wasa.

They tried to make Wasa Managing Director Taqsem A Khan drink sherbet made from the water. A few days before that Taqsem said Wasa water was completely safe for drinking.



Students of Silverdale Preparatory and Girls High School and their parents protest the murder of Samia Afrin Saima, who was a nursery student there. Forensic tests found the seven-year-old was raped before being strangled.

# Rapist killed her to hide his identity

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 village home in Cumilla's Dabordanga area, the additional commissioner said.

When Saima did not return home, her family started looking for her and found her body inside the empty flat about an hour later.

After autopsies, forensic experts said the girl had been raped before she was killed.

The murder shook the country to the core, triggering protests by students, teachers and parents.

"I could not save my daughter... Now the time has come for girls' parents to think how they can save them from such brutes," Saima's father Abdus Salam told reporters as he broke down in tears.

The grieving man also said many other murders had been forgotten and covered up and urged people to make sure that that did not happen again. "We want quick trial. We want to see the killer awarded the highest punishment in six months," he said.

**PROTEST**  
 Saima's fellow students, their parents and teachers demonstrated in Wari, demanding immediate arrest and capital punishment of the killer yesterday morning.

Chanting slogans, they marched to the Wari Police Station in the rain and staged a sit-in in front of the police station. They also handed a memorandum to the officer-in-charge.

"How do we feel safe when the life of a girl like Saima is not safe in the society... This type of crime will continue if the perpetrators go unpunished," Sworna Saha, a student of the school, told The Daily Star.

"We want to grow up without fear," said 9th grader Samia Jannat. Citing Tonu murder in Cumilla and Nusrat Jahan Rafi murder in Feni, another student Khusbu Akter Neha said the culture of impunity was leading to the recurrence of such crimes.

"We want people to treat us as human beings, not as girls," she said. Different organisations also expressed grave concern and demanded justice for all such incidents.

The Manusher Jonno Foundation in a statement urged the government to take effective steps to prevent violence and torture on children.

Its Executive Director Shaheen Anam called for forming committees in every neighbourhood to prevent rape. The incidents of violence against women and children have reached an unbearable level due to lack of justice, said the statement, adding that rape leaves short- and long-term impact on a child's physical and mental health and on their social lives.

At least 399 children were either raped or subjected to attempted rape in the first six months of this year, it said, citing newspapers.

Of them, 16 were killed after rape and 49 children were harassed sexually. In another statement, Naripokkho demanded a separate law to stop sexual harassment.

# Trump admin inept, insecure

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 presidency.

The Mail yesterday said the memos, likely leaked by someone within Britain's sprawling civil service, cover a period beginning in 2017.

In one of the most recent reported dispatches filed on June 22 Darroch criticised Trump's fraught foreign policy on Iran, which has prompted fears in global capitals of a military

conflict, as "incoherent" and "chaotic".

He allegedly said the president's assertion, that he called off retaliatory missile strikes against the Iranian regime after a US drone was shot down because it risked killing 150 Iranians, "doesn't stand up".

"It's more likely that he was never fully on board and that he was worried

about how this apparent reversal of his 2016 campaign promises would look come 2020," Darroch reportedly stated, referring to the next presidential election.

Britain's Foreign Office did not dispute the veracity of the memos.

"The British public would expect our ambassadors to provide ministers with an honest, unvarnished assessment of the politics in their

country," a spokeswoman said. "Their views are not necessarily the views of ministers or indeed the government," she added, noting "we pay them to be candid".

"Our team in Washington have strong relations with the White House and no doubt that these will withstand such mischievous behaviour," the spokeswoman said of the potential fallout from the leak.

# Strike by left parties passes off peacefully

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 Paltan intersections for about five hours, causing gridlocks on surrounding streets.

Chanting slogans against the gas price hike, the pickets brought out processions and paraded through Purana Paltan, Nightingale intersection, Zero Point and Jatiya Press Club areas.

The protesters said the government illogically increased the gas price and the hike would raise people's daily expenditures.

During the picketing, windows of two buses were smashed and one biker was assaulted in Purana Paltan area.

People were seen going to work while students went to their institutions. A few of them were closed.

Around 9:00am, the situation became tense when pickets halted a

bus and broke its windows at Purana Paltan intersection following an altercation with the driver. Police detained two protesters from the spot, but they were later freed.

Activists of Pragatisheel Chhatra Jote, an alliance of left-leaning student organisations, staged a sit-in at Shahbagh Intersection in support of the hartal and were seen torching tyres on the streets.

Nagarik Oikya, which extended its support to the hartal, also joined the protest.

According to the new gas price effective from this month, households using a single burner will pay Tk 925 instead of Tk 750 a month. Double-burner users will pay Tk 975 instead of Tk 800.

The average gas tariff for all users, including households, industries and businesses, rose by 32.8 percent. Several opposition political parties,

including BNP, Gonoforum, and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD Rob), extended their support to LDA's strike.

Attending a rally at the Purana Paltan intersection, Zonayed Saki, chief coordinator of Ganosamhati Andolon, said many expressed solidarity with the protest. "But only solidarity is not enough. They should take to the streets to launch a mass movement."

He said the government was giving an excuse that the gas price hike would help it bear the expense of importing liquefied natural gas (LNG).

"If India can import LNG at \$6 per cubic feet, why Bangladesh is getting it for \$10? There is no answer," he said, alleging that the government was importing it only to serve some companies who would deal with the business of LNG in future.

Saki added that the country's people welcomed the protest.

The LDA observed the strike across the country, including Chattogram, Sylhet, and Barishal.

Jahangirnagar University students blocked the Dhaka-Aricha highway for two and a half hours from 8:00am. The protest led to long tailbacks on both sides of the highway.

At Rajshahi University, Pragatisheel Chhatra Jote held a sit-in for half an hour from 8:30am in front of the university main gate.

In Narayanganj, police obstructed pickets in Rail Gate-2 area around 9:30am. A battery-run auto-rickshaw was vandalised at that time.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said hartal lost its appeal as people hardly responded to such programmes.

"Hike in the gas price is realistic ...," said Quader, also Awami League general secretary, while addressing a press briefing in the capital yesterday.

# Subsidy burden gets heavier

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 compulsions that governments in all countries have to cede to more or less, the economic rationale must also be at least congruent to such allocations to be in national interest and sustainable," Zahid Hussain, a former World Bank economist, told The Daily Star.

Speaking at a pre-budget discussion on June 12, Debapriya Bhattacharya, a distinguished fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, said injustice was done to farmers. The government did not take the right decision at the right time.

A farmer had to spend Tk 24,000 to grow a tonne of paddy, which the millers bought for Tk 15,000, causing Tk 9,000 loss a tonne to farmers, according to growers and the agriculture ministry.

The government, in turn, bought paddy from millers at Tk 26,000 a tonne, giving them a Tk 5,850 profit outright.

Under the circumstances, a farmer deserves Tk 5,000 to make up for the losses," Debapriya added.

About Tk 9,100 crore may be required in the budget for the one-off incentive for rice growers, according to the CPD.

Incentives for the agriculture sector, still the backbone of the economy, remained the same at Tk 9,000 crore as in fiscal 2018-19.

According to Zahid, budgetary allocation in the form of subsidies, incentives and transfers, when compared on an individual-sector basis this fiscal year, exceeds the allocation to sectors such as health, energy and power, local government and rural development and so on at 1.6 percent of the GDP.

"The question therefore is that of prioritisation and economic justification. This is understandable in case of agriculture, particularly at a time when bumper crop, paradoxical as it may seem, has meant distress for small and marginal farmers."

Additional cash transfers to these farmers would have been justified on the grounds of equity. "That unfortunately has not been proposed," he added.

**OTHER ALLOCATIONS**  
 Some Tk 9,500 crore has been set aside for the power sector, where the Awami League-led government enjoyed the most success in its past two terms spanning a decade.

As of May 29, the country generated 12,893 megawatts of electricity, the highest yet and a straight fourfold increase from fiscal 2009-10 when the AL assumed power.

As much as 93 percent of the population now have access to power, and the number of beneficiaries doubled in the last one decade.

will have 100 percent access to electricity," Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal said in his maiden budget speech on June 13.

This fiscal year, the subsidy allocation to the power sector is 3.26 percent higher than that in the last fiscal year, which raises the question of whether it would be a permanent feature of the budget.

Up to Tk 5,000 crore has been earmarked for subsidising the prices of gas, whose production cost has spiralled for the addition of costlier imported liquefied natural gas to the grid from this fiscal year, said finance ministry officials.

In fiscal 2018-19, Tk 2,500 crore was set aside for the gas sector.

The government is spending about Tk 35 for each cubic metre of imported LNG, while the cost of locally produced gas is about Tk 5, according to officials of Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC).

When LNG is blended with local gas, per unit cost of production stands at Tk 12.60, added the officials.

Subsequently, Petrobangla, the state-run oil and gas company, had called for hiking the gas prices ranging from Tk 7 to Tk 40 per unit for certain users such as power plants, fertiliser manufacturers and CNG-run auto-rickshaws.

hiked the gas prices for all including households.

For power plants, the price was increased 40.8 percent, for CNG-run auto-rickshaws 7.5 percent and for industries 37.89 percent.

The hikes have not brought the gas price on a par with the production cost, so the government is making up the difference, mentioned the BERC officials.

Zahid said subsidies for electricity and gas can be justified as transitional measures to allow time to users and providers to move towards full-cost recovery.

"It would have been helpful if that was made absolutely clear ...," he added.

This fiscal year, the government is introducing 2 percent cash incentive for migrant workers to encourage them to send remittance through the official channels.

Some Tk 3,060 crore has been allocated for this purpose.

"Could we not achieve the same objectives by allowing correction in the existing overvaluation of the taka?" asked Zahid.

By letting the taka float, the government would not only have been able to avoid the subsidy expenditure but also stem the erosion of foreign exchange reserves and reduce drainage of liquidity from the banking system, he noted.

# Car-ramming attack wounds Israeli soldiers

AFP, Jerusalem

A suspected Palestinian car-ramming attack in the occupied West Bank has wounded five Israeli soldiers and the alleged assailant has been arrested, the Israeli army said yesterday.

The troops were stationed on a roadside near the Palestinian town of Hizma as part of "operational activity" on Saturday night when the driver of a car rammed his vehicle into them, the army said.

Three soldiers were moderately injured and two hurt lightly in the incident near the town, which is located close to a checkpoint dividing the West Bank from Jerusalem, it said in a statement.

Soldiers later arrested the driver and his father at a checkpoint, it added.

It said an initial inquiry "suggests that the incident was a car-ramming attack" and not an accident.

Israeli army raids in the West Bank regularly set off tensions with Palestinian residents.

# Sudan ruler vows to implement deal agreed with protesters

AFP, Khartoum

Sudan's army ruler General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan vowed Saturday to implement the power sharing deal agreed with demonstrators, as the protest campaign cancelled a nationwide day of civil disobedience later this month.

The ruling military council and protest leaders agreed Friday to form a joint civilian-military governing body aimed at ending the country's months-long political crisis.

"We, as the military council, promise to protect what has been agreed upon and ensure that it is implemented," Burhan said in a statement broadcast live on state television.

"We are going to work with our partners from the Alliance for Freedom and Change and other forces in close cooperation in order to realise the aspirations of the people," he said.

The deal reached Friday followed two days of hard-won talks brokered by Ethiopian and African Union mediators, after negotiations collapsed in May over who should lead the new body -- a civilian or soldier.

The agreement stipulates that the new governing body will be presided over by a military nominee for the first 21 months, and the last 18 months by a civilian.

It is expected to be ready for signing by the two sides early next week, although the draft has postponed the formation of a 300-seat transitional parliament that had been agreed upon in previous talks.

The breakthrough accord came amid a political deadlock that has gripped Sudan since the generals ousted leader Omar al-Bashir in a palace coup in April following months of mass protests nationwide.

Burhan's remarks came after the Alliance for Freedom and Change cancelled a nationwide day of civil disobedience that was set for July 14.

The alliance released a new programme of events on social media, which makes no mention of the planned campaign.

Ahmed al-Rabie, a prominent leader from the movement, told AFP the decision was made "to give room for the agreement" to be implemented.

# Malaria surges back in crisis-hit Venezuela

AFP, El Tucuco

The sweltering heat of the Venezuelan forest makes no difference to Jose Gregorio, who trembles with a cold chill. "I have pain everywhere, fever," he stammers.

Gregorio has the classic symptoms of malaria, a disease eradicated years ago among his Yukpa indigenous people, but it's back with a vengeance all across crisis-struck Venezuela.

"He had sore joints and then started vomiting, and it's been four or five days since he's eaten anything," says his worried wife Marisol.

Their four-month-old baby babbles beside his father on the bed. "The baby and I also had malaria," says Marisol. "Before, that was not the case here, there was only chikungunya and dengue, malaria came back here last year." She doesn't bat an eyelid at the mention of either of the other mosquito-borne viruses, whose spread has been fueled by the collapse of Venezuela's health system.

"Here" is El Tucuco, a small village at the foot of the mountains that form the border with Colombia, a three-hour drive from Maracaibo in Venezuela's western Zulia state.